

First of a Series on
INDIAN NEIGHBORS
OF OUR UNITED STATES SETTLERS

EXPLORERS IN INDIAN COUNTRY

by

HARRIET SMITH

Raymond Foundation



Museum Stories, No. 323

October 5, 1957

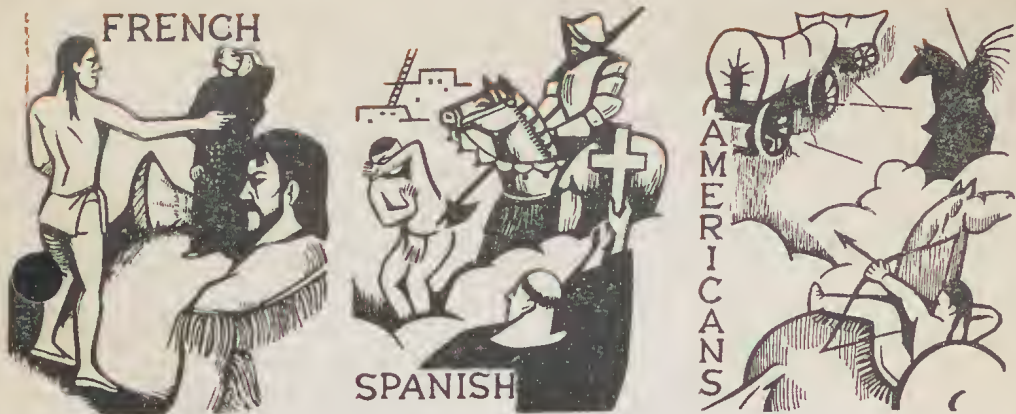


Explorers in Indian Country

"Indian" has meant very different things to newcomers in various parts of America. Even in the *same region at different times* the local Indians gave a very different sort of welcome to settlers than they had given to earlier explorers and traders. Sometimes friendships had changed. Sometimes enemy tribes had moved in.

In 1001 A.D. Leif Erickson and his band of explorers made winter camp at a place he named Vinland. This was probably somewhere nearer the Gulf of the St. Lawrence River than Long Island. The Indian tribe at this spot was so fierce that even the hardy VIKINGS were driven away. Seven years later, Norse families from Greenland tried to settle in Vinland, but the Indians wiped out their homesteads in 1011. Such unfriendly experiences with these Indians discouraged the Norsemen, and they concentrated their settlements back in Greenland and Iceland, where there was no neighbor trouble.

We have no further record of meetings between Europeans and Indians along the Atlantic Coast until just after Columbus, but by 1600 scattered ENGLISH contacts from Maine to Virginia had made friends of some Algonkian tribes and enemies of others. At the first English settlements, in Virginia, misunderstandings turned friendly Indians into enemies (Story 2). In contrast, the Pilgrims came in 1620 to an unfriendly neighborhood but, through luck and wise leadership, made lasting friendships and learned from their Indian neighbors the ways of getting along in this new, harsh land (Story 3).



But already DUTCH traders were visiting the Hudson River (Story 4), there were FRENCH settlements in Canada (Story 5), and the SPANIARDS had come up from Mexico into Florida and New Mexico (Story 7).

Spaniards first landed in the New World in 1492 on an island off the southeastern coast of North America. Columbus thought he had reached India, and so he called the island people Indians. Their own name (Carib) still names their sea (part of the Atlantic Ocean between North and South America), but as slave laborers for their Spanish conquerors the Caribs soon died out. Still searching for treasure, the Spaniards went on to the mainland, where, by 1521, Cortez had conquered the civilized Indian empire of the Aztecs in Mexico.

From Mexico City General Coronado rode north in 1540, seeking the golden cities of Cibola described in legends. These golden cities turned out to be adobe pueblos in New Mexico, but the disappointed Coronado expedition went on exploring north and east—giving Plains Indians their first sight of horses. In the 1600's these buffalo-hunters started getting horses from Spanish settlements in New Mexico, and horses so changed the Plains tribes that their warriors almost changed the course of American history two hundred years later (Story 8).

The spread of the United States from the Mississippi to the Rockies is a suspense story of cowboys and Indians in (at first) equal contest for the great western grasslands. Almost everywhere else in the New World the coming of settlers to a new region has meant the rapid surrender and retreat of the Indians from their homeland (Stories 6 and 9).

This page is for your own notes and illustrations

Second of a Series on
INDIAN NEIGHBORS
OF OUR UNITED STATES SETTLERS

MISUNDERSTANDINGS IN VIRGINIA

by

HARRIET SMITH

Raymond Foundation



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Misunderstandings in Virginia

Just five years after Columbus discovered the New World the whole Atlantic Coast of North America was claimed for England by the explorations of the Cabots, but it was almost ninety years before Walter Raleigh got permission to start the first English colony in America. In 1584 he sent two sea captains to find a good location, and they reported that the island of Roanoke, off the middle coast, would be an ideal spot—that it had the best soil in the world and that the Indians there were “gentle, loving, and faithful.”

Raleigh named all this new land Virginia in honor of the Queen. Encouraged by the welcome given his explorers and by their descriptions of the well-organized and comfortable life of the Powhatan Indians, he hoped that his colonists, sent to Roanoke in 1585, would learn from such friendly Indian neighbors how to farm and live in this new kind of country.

But the first English colonists weren't farmers. Like the Spanish conquistadores, these “gentleman-adventurers” intended to spend their time searching for gold and pearls, and so they forced the Indians near Roanoke to give them food. When the Indians stopped being “gentle, loving, and faithful,” the Englishmen burned the cornfields and killed a chief. No wonder they had to be rescued and shipped back to England. And

no wonder the second group of colonists that Raleigh sent to Roanoke found some of their new neighbors no longer friendly. This time the settlers had their families with them and they lived in fear. One night, intending to punish enemy Indians, they attacked the wrong village and killed the still-friendly Indians that had been giving them food. John White, leader of the colony, had to go



to England for more supplies, and when he returned four years later the hundred colonists of Roanoke had vanished.

It wasn't until 1607 that a group of merchants in London started another colony in Virginia. They instructed their settlers to be very careful not to offend the Indians, yet to choose a spot that could be defended. Jamestown was in trouble from the start—Indian attacks, sickness from the unhealthy location, and arguments between the leaders. Finally Captain John Smith took charge of the colony. After supervising the building of houses and a fort, he got the settlers started planting gardens while he visited more than 160 Powhatan Indian villages to trade for food for the colony.

These were real towns. The long mat-covered houses were lined up along a main street, with special areas set off—a dancing ground, a feasting place, and a burial house and place of prayer. A wall of strong upright posts protected either the whole town or sometimes just the big house of the chief, the burial house, and the homes of the most important people. Gardens at the edges of town were guarded by watchmen. There were other special jobs and special classes of people, and even a stranger could tell which was a chief or a priest or other important person by the way he wore his hair and dressed. There was a chief of each town and tribal group, and over them all was a ruling chief called Powhatan.

On one of his exploring trips Captain Smith was captured by some of Powhatan's warriors, but the great chief's daughter, Pocahontas (Playful One), begged her father to spare the English leader's life. For the first two years at Jamestown, Smith's wise leadership kept trouble from flaring up with the Indians. But after he was injured in an explosion and returned to England, the settlers bribed a jealous chief to help them kidnap Pocahontas. While the Indian "princess" was being held for ransom in Jamestown, she and Smith's young friend, John Rolfe, fell in love, and their marriage brought a peace with the Virginia Indians that lasted only as long as Powhatan lived. Another hundred years of misunderstandings left no more Indians in Virginia for the settlers to fear.

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Third of a Series on
INDIAN NEIGHBORS
OF OUR UNITED STATES SETTLERS

ALGONKIAN NEIGHBORS OF THE PILGRIMS

by

HARRIET SMITH

Raymond Foundation



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October 19, 1957

Algonkian Neighbors of the Pilgrims

For over a hundred years fishermen and explorers from many European countries had been touching various spots along the northeastern shores of the New World. Some of these first contacts between Europeans and the northeastern Algonkian Indians were friendly and profitable in trade, but more often they ended in a fight or kidnapping. Certainly the Pilgrims did not intend to settle in such little-known land among such unpredictable Indian neighbors. But these religious refugees were both luckier and wiser than the Virginia colonists.

The Pilgrims were lucky to be blown north off their intended course to Virginia and to land on Cape Cod in December of 1620. The Indian tribe living here in 1607 drove Champlain away when he tried to start a French settlement in Massachusetts. But this unfriendly tribe had been almost wiped out by "the great sickness" of 1619, and it was one of their deserted villages that the Pilgrims chose for their Plymouth colony after five weeks of searching for a safe place.

All winter the few Indians they saw in the distance acted afraid and unfriendly. Once about forty Indians exchanged arrows for shots with an exploring party. Then the Pilgrims took some corn they found in a deserted village, and one night Indians took some axes Pilgrim woodcutters had left in the woods. By spring neither side was feeling very neighborly.

The Pilgrims were very lucky that their first visitor was Samoset, greeting them with the words, "Welcome, Englishmen!" Samoset means "He Who Walks Over Much," and this footloose man, roaming south from his home in Maine into Connecticut, had become friends with an English explorer. He naturally expected friendship from these English people too, and it was well for the Pilgrims that they welcomed and fed and clothed him. And when Samoset brought Massasoit, chief of the nearest tribe, and Squanto to meet his new friends, the Pilgrims were wise in the way they treated these key men. Chief Massasoit and his warriors came ready for either a fight or an agreement. They were uneasy about these newcomers, but even

more fearful of enemy Indians to the west. When the Pilgrims welcomed him politely, Massasoit suggested, "Let us help each other." The peace treaty they made was kept until Massasoit died forty years later.

Squanto had been born in a village of the Wampanoag tribe at Plymouth and kidnapped to England by traders. Just a few months before the Pilgrims arrived, he had got back home to find all his friends and relatives gone. This lonely Indian was adopted by the Governor of Plymouth Colony and lived with the Pilgrims for the rest of his days.

The Pilgrims said God must have sent Squanto to them. The name means "The Door," and through Squanto these settlers entered into the ways of their new world. He taught the methods of hunting, fishing, and farming of the Woodland tribes of New England. In summer these Algonkian Indians lived in small villages of dome-shaped bark-covered wigwams, near which the women grew corn, beans, squashes, and pumpkins. The men were warriors and hunters and, in winter, took their families on a long camping trip to hunt for furs, buckskins, and meat. The last winter-camp was in a maple grove, where the Indians boiled down their year's supply of sweetening before returning home in time to plant the crops.

"When oak leaves were the size of a mouse's ear" Squanto showed the Pilgrims how his people planted Indian corn, with three small fish in each hill to make the stony soil richer. By fall, three full storehouses stood between the Pilgrims and starvation this second winter, and so they decided to set aside a few days to rest and thank God for all their blessings. An invitation brought Chief Massasoit and ninety of his braves with gifts of wild turkey and deer. This first Thanksgiving lasted for three days of games, worship, and feasting.



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Fourth of a Series on
INDIAN NEIGHBORS
OF OUR UNITED STATES SETTLERS

BUSINESS PARTNERS IN NEW YORK

by

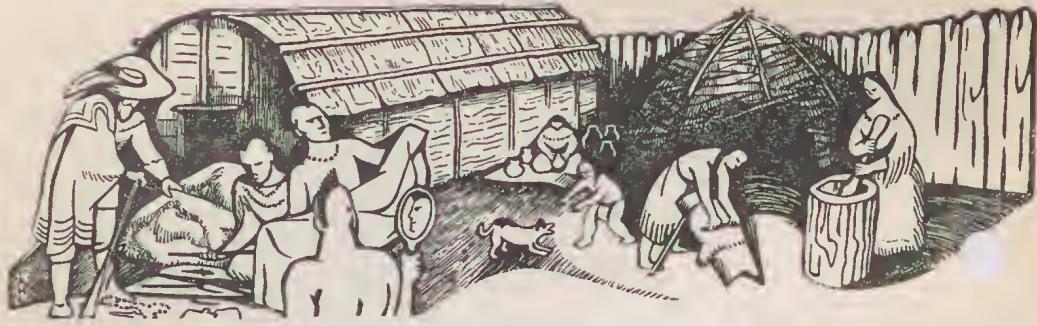
HARRIET SMITH

Raymond Foundation



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October 26, 1957



Business Partners in New York

With the Iroquois it was always strictly business—and a tradition of warfare with all other tribes. When they welcomed Henry Hudson and his crew in 1609 and invited the explorers to a feast at the Iroquois village near where Albany, New York, now stands, these Indians were quick to notice the Dutchmen's interest in their furs and quick to grasp the chance to trade furs for wonderful new things from Europe.

The Dutch West Indies Company started a colony with its main town on Manhattan Island. But the colony's main business was fur-trading and so its business headquarters was at Fort Orange, far up the Hudson River at the eastern edge of the powerful Iroquois league. These five tribes, each with its main town and surrounding hunting-lands, stretched along the Mohawk Valley almost to Lake Erie. In the 1500's they had realized that, even more than fighting with surrounding Algonkian enemies, constant wars with each other were weakening them all. They united into a League of Nations, agreeing to settle arguments between member tribes and to vote on foreign policy at Council Meetings of delegates from all five tribes.

Dutch traders were welcomed in the Iroquois towns. Outside the tall log stockade they saw wide fields of corn, beans, and squashes, and the nearby woods and streams were full of meat and fish. The houses were comfortable year-round homes (something like Quonset huts) in which eight to ten related families had compartments like sections in a train. The two families across from each other shared a fireplace in the aisle, and so there might be five plumes of smoke rising from slits in the bark-covered, arched roof of a single longhouse.

Elm bark was peeled off in big squares to cover the house framework. Pieces of elm bark were turned up and tied to make household equipment—trays, pails, and barrels. One big slab could be quickly sewed together at both ends to make a canoe. The Iroquois could make something of bark or wood or deerskin to fill almost every need. But with the fur trade came the luxuries of life from Europe: wool blankets and bright cloth with beads for trimmings, mirrors that the Iroquois called “little springs of smooth water,” iron hoes, and fishhooks, axes, and knives of steel. Most of all, guns!

To the grandchildren of the people who had first welcomed the Dutch traders, these things were no longer just extra luxuries. They had almost forgotten how to make their own kinds of pottery cook-pots, blankets, and tools, and they depended more and more on the guns from Europe to shoot beaver, whose skins bought things they couldn't make for themselves. And more guns were needed for war too. By 1650 the beaver were almost killed off in Iroquois country, and, rather than become poor, the League went on the warpath against tribes farther and farther west. The Great Lakes tribes had been sending their furs directly to the French at Montreal. Now the Iroquois forced other Indians to trade only with them, and *they* took the furs to the Dutch trading-post on the Hudson River. It made no difference to the Iroquois when, in 1664, Dutch New Netherland became English New York. Their all-important fur trade continued with the English as customers.

Ninety years later, all tribes of the Iroquois League joined their British business partners in the war for Canada against the French and their Algonkian Indian allies. But in 1776, when settlers of the thirteen English colonies revolted against British rule, the Iroquois League split up. The tribes with whom the British superintendent had “kept the chain of friendship bright” naturally voted to keep on fighting under British officers, and many families retreated with them into Canada at the end of the Revolution. Most of the Iroquois who had helped their American neighbors moved to Wisconsin, but many still remain, on six reservations, in New York State.

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Fifth of a Series on
INDIAN NEIGHBORS
OF OUR UNITED STATES SETTLERS

INDIAN CITIZENS OF NEW FRANCE

by

HARRIET SMITH

Raymond Foundation



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November 2, 1957

Indian Citizens of New France

The French made the most unpromising start in the New World of any of the European nations, and yet, through friendship, they won the lasting loyalty of their Algonkian Indian neighbors and shared with them citizenship in New France.

The French king sent explorers to find three things: gold (like the treasure the Spaniards were sending back to their rulers), the short route to India that Columbus had failed to discover, or furs to be sold to the wealthy nobles of Europe. The first French explorer, Jacques Cartier, sailed up the St. Lawrence River in 1535 with more than a hundred men. But he found only a cold, unfriendly, and unhealthful land. He left most of his sailors at an Indian village where the city of Quebec now stands and sailed on until his way was blocked by the rapids that he named Lachine (China) because he hoped that this land of treasures might be just beyond.

Cartier's expedition might have succeeded in starting a colony if the Frenchmen could have stayed at the Iroquois village here at Montreal. This was a big town of fifty bark houses protected by a triple palisade and with plenty of corn stored for winter from the surrounding clearing. But winter was coming much sooner than it did in France, and Cartier had to return to the men and ships he had left at Quebec. He found his sailors on bad terms with the Indians, and the Frenchmen spent a miserable winter, alone, in fear and sickness. Twenty-five died, but the rest recovered because one Indian who had remained friendly gave them medicine made of pine needles and bark. We know now that this disease was scurvy, which is caused by a lack of vegetable food, and that it was cured by the vitamin C in the Indian medicine.

Unfriendly relations with the Indians kept Cartier's expedition from discovering the rich fur-resources of Canada, and the French kings were so discouraged that they didn't attempt another settlement for seventy years. This leader, Samuel de Champlain, didn't intend to come so far north. He tried to settle at Cape Cod in 1607 but was driven away by the Indians

there. The next year he found Cartier's winter cabins and named the place Quebec—but the Indians were gone. There was no one to give these explorers the Indian medicine, and only eight men lived through the winter until a supply ship came in June with more settlers. Champlain became the trusted friend of the northern Algonkian Indians. They guided him over their river "highways" on many exploring trips. Near the

lake later named for Champlain, an Iroquois war party attacked the Algonkians, and Champlain scared them away by firing his gun. But when Champlain took sides with his Algonkian friends, he helped make the powerful Iroquois enemies of all Frenchmen for the next two hundred years.

More and more French families came to start farm villages along the banks of the St. Lawrence River. Friendly Algonkians came to live near the mission built at Montreal, and this town soon became headquarters for the French fur-trade—for most of the young Frenchmen who had come adventuring to the new colony found that its wealth was in furs. They lived in the forests with the Indians during winter, learning from them how to fish through the ice, how to track and trap otter, beaver, muskrat, and deer and how to use snowshoes and toboggans for traveling on deep snows. The French fur-traders dressed like their hosts, and the fur turbans and wide, diagonally braided sashes worn by northern Algonkian braves became the trademark of these French "Davy Crocketts."

As soon as the ice melted, the Indians would gather at the nearest French fort. From this wilderness meeting-place each trader led his band of fur-loaded canoes to join the long line stretching out of eyesight toward Montreal, where French ships waited to take the year's fur harvest to Europe.



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Sixth of a Series on
INDIAN NEIGHBORS
OF OUR UNITED STATES SETTLERS

NEWCOMERS TO THE ILLINOIS COUNTRY

by

HARRIET SMITH

Raymond Foundation



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November 9, 1957

Newcomers to the Illinois Country

Not only the three white nations but also all except one of the Indian tribes recorded in midwest history (since 1666) were newcomers, in turn, to the Illinois country. Only the Illinois had been living for several hundred years in southern Wisconsin and in the state named for them. Their big villages of clay-plastered houses, surrounded by cornfields, were scattered along the rich river valleys. Père Marquette and Joliet visited their town, Peoria, when returning up the Illinois River in 1673.

Already the Illinois were being pushed from the north and east. When the tribes of the northeastern forests started trading furs for guns, these armed tribes, especially the Iroquois, soon killed all the beavers in their own territory and started raiding farther and farther west. The unarmed Great Lakes tribes fled, each shoving out the tribe ahead, on down the west shore of Lake Michigan into Illinois. The Illinois Indians drew closer together along their Illinois River, finally gathering around La Salle's Fort St. Louis at Starved Rock. Here they were massacred in 1770 by a confederacy of the intruding tribes, urged on by the Iroquois, who resented the competition of the Illinois in the fur trade.

As the Illinois were pushed out of the way, the Sauk-Fox took over the northern part of their territory, the Potawatomi the region around the foot of Lake Michigan, and the Kickapoo and Miami the rest. No wonder each of the French explorers found a different tribe at Chicago! These newcomers continued their northeastern Algonkian ways, living in villages of bark-covered wigwams in summer and camping as family bands for the winter season of hunting for meat, skins, and furs.

Furs were the wealth that France had found in the New World, and when the Indian nations were at war among themselves, there were some years when no fur fleet came from the Great Lakes region to the fur fair at Montreal. The French decided they would have to learn more about the lands from which the Indians brought the furs. Priests from Quebec and

Montreal had been following their Indian guides on the water highways leading deeper into the continent, and so had the fur-traders. Now they traveled in teams to serve their country as well as God and business. In 1673 Father Marquette and the young trader Louis Joliet mapped the canoe routes into the Illinois country that La Salle and Father Hennepin followed a few years later. By 1700 French fur-traders, soldiers, and farmers were scattered along the rivers through the heart of North America. They got along just as well with their Algonkian neighbors here as along the St. Lawrence.

In 1760 the British and Iroquois defeated the French and their Algonkian allies, and British soldiers took over the French wilderness forts. But only French families lived in such midwest settlements as Detroit, Cahokia, Kaskaskia, and Vincennes until after the American Revolution.

During the Revolution, Hamilton, the British military governor at Detroit, was paying the Lake tribes to raid the new American settlements in Kentucky. The American leader there, George Rogers Clark, said his spies reported that the English, although they now "controlled the Great Lakes, were not popular with the natives," while "the French inhabitants of these western settlements had great influence over the Indians, by whom they were more beloved than were any other Europeans."

Colonel Clark decided to make an invasion across the Ohio River in order to persuade the French people there to stop their Indian friends from fighting the Americans. In 1779 he conquered Kaskaskia and Vincennes and won the support of the French leaders. They persuaded the Indian chiefs to come to Cahokia and Vincennes and request conferences with the "Chief of the Long Knives." Clark would hold out to each chief two belts—one decorated with red for war and the other with the white wampum of peace. Most of the chiefs chose the white belt, and "they smoked the pipe of peace together."

Because the Indians of the Illinois country trusted their French neighbors, the whole region between the Appalachian Mountains and the Mississippi River was saved for the United States of America.



THE ILLINOIS COUNTRY 1667-1790		
FORT FRENCH MISSION WOODLAND INDIAN VILLAGE FRENCH SETTLEMENT AMERICAN SETTLEMENT	INDIAN TRAIL PORTAGE ROUTE OF THE AMERICAN "LONG KNIVES" 1779 FRENCH EXPLORERS: PERE MARQUETTE + LOUIS JOLIET 1673 LASALLE + FATHER HENNEPIN 1680 KENTUCKY SETTLEMENTS 1775 SHAWNEE WARRIORS	LOUISVILLE TO FORT MASSAC FORT MASSAC TO KASKASKIA TO CAHOKIA, THEN VINCENNES KASKASKIA TO CAHOKIA

Seventh of a Series on
INDIAN NEIGHBORS
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NATIVE SERVANTS OF NEW SPAIN

by

HARRIET SMITH

Raymond Foundation



Museum Stories, No. 329

November 16, 1957

Native Servants of New Spain

The area now called Arizona and New Mexico was the bare frontier of the rich Spanish colony whose capital was Mexico City. Oh, there was brief excitement about stories of "Seven Golden Cities of Cibola" somewhere to the north, and in 1540 an army expedition under General Coronado rode up from Mexico City expecting to make another rich conquest. When they saw the farm towns of the Zuni Indians, they realized that the only thing golden here was the color of adobe walls in desert sunlight. Coronado reported: "The Seven Cities are seven little villages . . . of very good houses with three and four stories . . . but this land is too cold for settlement."

For a thousand years Southwestern Indians had grown corn, beans, and squashes in this half-desert land and stored their harvests in the snug apartment houses built by their ancestors. And for three hundred years the peace-loving Pueblos had been able to fight off raids of Navaho and Apache invaders.

They greeted the Spanish soldiers with courteous curiosity until demands for corn, cotton blankets, and service aroused desperate resistance at some pueblos. But mud walls aren't much protection from cannon fire, and courage alone can't defeat mounted soldiers with guns and armor. The Spaniards helped themselves to the best living-quarters at Bernalillo and for two years stripped the neighboring towns of food and cloth as taxes while they searched frantically for anything the King of Spain considered treasure. They found seventy-five pueblos (but farming can't give the quick wealth the Spaniards sought). They discovered the Grand Canyon (but this wonder of the world was only a barrier to exploring farther westward). They explored the Great Plains, where enormous herds of wild "humpbacked cattle" grew fat on endless pastures (but conquerors don't think much of becoming ranchers). Fights kept flaring up, most of the horses died, Coronado was weakened by a fall, and the discouraged treasure-hunters returned to Mexico. The Pueblo Indians still tell, as legends, of the terror that came with the white soldiers on horseback.

The Pueblos again had to accept Spaniards as masters in 1598 when Don Juan de Onate led a hundred colonist families, with thousands of sheep, cattle, and horses, to start farms and ranches near Santa Fe, New Mexico. The King of Spain would "give" miles of land in New Spain to any Spanish gentleman who could bring at least ten families to start a settlement. The landlord promised to make the Indians on "his" land Christians and to supply food and clothes, since they had to work for him without pay. Thus all the Eastern Pueblos became servants.



The priest at the mission church built beside each pueblo baptised the Indians with new "magic" names, but he forbade the masked kachina dances that make the Pueblos feel that they belong to both their earthly and spiritual worlds. The Pueblos did learn how to use iron tools for farming and how to grow some new foods, such as wheat, peaches, peppers, and onions. They got wool for weaving, and they learned how to use horses (even if they weren't allowed to own or ride them).

After almost ninety years of being treated as slaves, the Pueblos revolted. Aroused by a medicine-man named Popé, each pueblo, on August 10, 1680, attacked the nearest haciendas and missions. The Spaniards that escaped fled back to Mexico.

For twelve years the Pueblos were free—but full of fear. Their ancient enemies, the Apaches, now had horses, and there were no Spanish soldiers to hold back their raids. It was almost a relief when, in 1692, a new Spanish governor rode back into Santa Fe, and the Rio Grande Pueblos again served Spanish masters. They became half-Spanish in their ways, but, over in Arizona, the Pueblos of the Hopi tribe were far enough away from the Spanish at Santa Fe to be able to keep most of their old ways of living and worshipping to this present day.

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Eighth of a Series on
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WARFARE ON THE PLAINS

by

HARRIET SMITH

Raymond Foundation



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Warfare on the Plains

For centuries many tribes of Indians had hunted buffalo on the Great Plains of North America. A few, like the Blackfeet of the northern plains, had always been full-time hunters, following the great herds on foot from camp to camp. But most of the Plains tribes of American history (like the Cheyenne and Crow) used to go only on seasonal hunts. They lived in villages near streams at the edge of the grasslands and did not depend on the swift far-traveling buffalo as their only source of food and shelter until after they got horses.

The Apaches, on the southern edge of the plains, were raiding Spanish settlements for horses in the early 1600's, and in 1680 Pueblo Indians (who, as stableboys for Spanish masters, had learned about horses) became horse-traders with tribes to the north. During their twelve years of freedom, the Pueblos passed on not only the horses left behind by Spanish refugees but also the knowledge of saddles and riding gained by secret practice at ranches and missions. It took about a hundred years for horses to pass from tribe to tribe, by trade or theft, northward over the whole plains country.

With horses, everything speeded up on the plains. One after another of the tribes at the edge of the woodlands left their villages to hunt full-time on the open plains. Last of all, about the time of the American Revolution, came the Dakota Sioux, driven from their farm villages in the woods of Minnesota by the Chippewa (an Algonkian tribe with guns from the French fur-trade). These discouraged refugees traded their last possessions for a few horses from a tribe on the Missouri River, and, using these horses, they stole many more from other Plains tribes. They took over the area now named for them (Dakota) and in a very short time became the most powerful and wealthy of all the



tribes leading this exciting new life of buffalo hunting.

A few men on horseback could shoot more food in a day than a whole village of women had been able to grow in a summer. Buffalo meat was dried and made into travel food (pemmican) to feed the band all winter. In fact, the buffalo was a sort of general store that furnished the Plains Indians a year-round supply of food, of strong skins for their movable, packable house (tipi) and for warm woolly robes to use as overcoats and blankets, and of materials (leather, horns, hoofs, and bones) to make weapons, tools, and household equipment.

The horse made it possible for the Indians to make a good living on the plains as hunters, and it also made them professional warriors a hundred years before they fought the pale-faces. Now a man could spend most of his time in warfare—to win wealth (which was measured in horses) and to win honors (which were advertised by the eagle feathers in his warbonnet). When mule trains and then settlers started pouring along the Santa Fe and Oregon trails in the 1830's and 1840's, some Indian war parties were delighted to discover this new source of horses and loot. American forts were built in the 1850's mainly to protect the wagon trains, and the first United States treaties with Plains tribes only set boundaries to their hunting grounds and promised safe passage for white settlers on their way to the Southwest and the West Coast.

Then, in the 1860's, railroads brought professional white hunters to slaughter the buffalo, and after the Civil War many more easterners came to start new lives in the West. New treaties gave Indian lands to white settlers, leaving reservations too small for hunting. The government didn't understand that the Plains tribes considered farming women's work and thought cattle were meant to be killed. Soon Indians and settlers were struggling desperately with each other, and Plains warfare was changed from a series of spare-time games, with a different war chief chosen for each raid, into a grim campaign for survival under permanent leaders. Thus even the great chiefs, like Sitting Bull, Cochise, and Geronimo, were another result of the white man's coming to the plains.

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Ninth of a Series on
INDIAN NEIGHBORS
OF OUR UNITED STATES SETTLERS

SURRENDER IN THE OREGON COUNTRY

by

HARRIET SMITH

Raymond Foundation



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Surrender in the Oregon Country

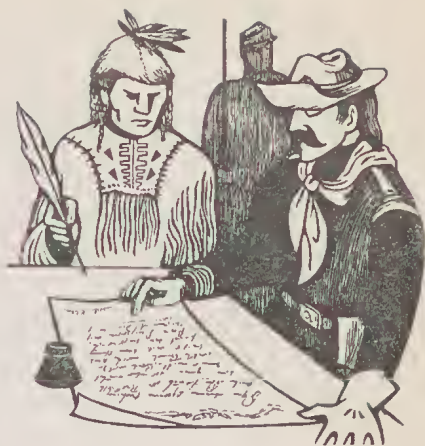
As soon as a Yankee sailing-ship first anchored, in 1792, at the mouth of the Columbia River, a fleet of big sea-going canoes brought the local head men out for a business conference. These were proud and wealthy traders of the Chinook Indian tribe, rowed by their captive Indian slaves and wearing the finest furs the Boston sailors had ever seen.

Already these Chinook were the recognized traders among the plank-house villages of the many well-to-do tribes along the Pacific Coast and inland up the Columbia River. And already the Chinook traders had heard of the metal tools and glass beads brought, in trade for sea-otter furs, to far northern villages by great sailing-ships. Now these Indian businessmen arranged for regular fur-trading stopovers by American ships on their way to China. This deal brought great wealth to both the "Boston men" and the Chinook for forty years—until one ship brought also a fever-sickness that killed most of the tribe in a single summer.

Meanwhile, in 1803, our government bought from Spain the whole region from the Mississippi to the Rockies and the next year sent an exploring expedition across it to try to find an overland route to the rich northwest coast. At their winter camp in North Dakota, the leaders, Lewis and Clark, found a guide who knew the way into the mountains. This was the Shoshone Indian girl, Sacajawea (Bird Woman), who had been captured on a raid by an Eastern Plains tribe and was happy to get a chance to return home to the Rockies. She led the explorers, first by boat and then on foot, into the mountains. Here the chief of the first Shoshone camp that they came upon was Bird Woman's brother. He gladly sold them horses to ride through the mountain passes and forests to the sea.

Soon American trappers and traders were following this Oregon Trail. Some stayed in the mountains while others brought their furs down the Columbia River to the trading posts near the coast. The country stayed wild, which suited both the trappers and the Indians, and they met in friendship around

each other's campfires. Then came one of the most sudden changes in history. In 1840 almost all the land west of the Mississippi was still actually Indian country. In 1843 a great train of sixty covered wagons traveled the two thousand miles to western Oregon, and during the next few years thousands of families followed along the Oregon Trail. In one valley after another, the Indians were moved off the best farming and timber lands onto reservations in barren country strange to them.



These Northwest *Inland* tribes lived quite differently from the Coastal Indians. Their homes were huts instead of plank "mansions," and their lives weren't ruled by the desire to show off their wealth and social position. But in *all* the Northwest tribes, each family had the right to dig camas roots at certain places, pick the berries of certain patches, and fish during the salmon run from a definite rock or rapids. This strong feeling of belonging to their own home-village and of everything around it belonging to specific families made moving to a reservation especially hard for the Indians of the Oregon Territory. Chiefs noted for friendliness to the white newcomers became suddenly desperate, and there were two brief, hopeless Indian wars in 1855 and 1877.

After ten years of reservation life, Chief Washakie of the Shoshone spoke for all Indians: "The white man, who . . . lives where he likes, cannot know the cramp we feel in this little spot. Every foot of what you proudly call America not very long ago belonged to the Redman. But the white man had learned . . . how to make superior tools and weapons . . . and there seemed no end to the hordes of men that followed them from other lands beyond the sea. And so, at last, our fathers were steadily driven out, or killed, and we, their sons . . . are cornered in little spots of the earth all ours by right."

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